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*Irish History and the Irish Question.* By GOLDWIN SMITH. (New York: McClure, Phillips and Co.; Toronto: Morang and Co. 1905. Pp. viii, 270.)

IN two hundred pages of large print Mr. Smith has here given a brilliant narrative of Irish history from the earliest times down to Gladstone's day. To this he has added a chapter on Ireland's political relation to England, and a chapter by another hand on the Irish Land Code. For his narrative Mr. Smith has selected what is most significant and of permanent influence; his selection is usually good. His condensation is masterful. To the French invasion under Hoche, for instance, Lecky gives forty pages; Mr. Smith gives twenty lines; Lecky argues the Fitzwilliam episode in sixty pages; Mr. Smith states it in less than two. Transitions are so skilfully made that the reader makes the leap of a century unawares; there are no dates as sign-posts of his rapid progress. Controversial points are affirmed with a decisiveness which leaves no chance for the hesitation of doubt or the delay of *pro* and *con*. Great men, great deeds, great horrors crowd upon each other with dramatic distinctness. And still the thread of the narrative stands out clearly and binds the whole together. The style has all the vigor and freshness of youth, though the author is past four-score. The sentences are short, crisp, and suggestive. It is interesting and stimulating, but not always impartial or impersonal. The author does not hesitate to judge past history according to his own view of present politics.

"Of all histories the history of Ireland is the saddest." These words open the first chapter, and form the refrain of the whole book. The blame for the "seven centuries of woe" Mr. Smith appears to lay about equally on (a) Nature, (b) Irish character, (c) the Roman Catholic Church, and (d) English greed. (a) Nature made "the theatre of this tragedy" an island densely clothed with woods, which, with the broad and bridgeless rivers, tended to perpetuate the division into clans and prevent the growth of a nation; it also made the English conquest partial only, long, and agonizing. England, with her coal and minerals, and Ireland, with her pasture land, were meant to be commercial supplements of each other, but "Nature made a fatal mistake in peopling them with different and uncongenial races" (p. 294). (b) The Celt has everywhere shown himself "impulsive, prone to laughter and to tears, wanting, compared with the Teuton, in depth of character, in steadiness and in perseverance. He is inclined rather to personal rule or leadership than to a constitutional polity" (p. 3). The circumstances of Irish history have all tended to foster and prolong this notion of personal rule, and make it a means of agitation against government and law. "To set up a stable democracy in Ireland would surely be an arduous undertaking" (p. 222). (c) The existence of the Roman Catholic Church has not merely added religious hatred to race hatred and stirred the Irish to make common cause with England's enemies, but at the present

as in the past is wholly medieval in its influence. "An Irish peasant lad, having been intellectually secluded for seven years at Maynooth, comes out proof against the intellectual influences and advancing science of his time" (p. 219). (d) Under the Restoration Irish interests began to be systematically sacrificed to English commercial greed. "Protectionism was the creed of that dark age" (p. 82). Cut off from manufactures and from trade by English laws made in English interests, the wretched people of Ireland were thrown back for subsistence wholly upon the land, for which they competed with the eagerness of despair, undertaking to pay for their little lots impossible rents. The chapters which follow on Ireland in the eighteenth century,—the Penal Code, the cottier's unutterable misery, the Whiteboy outrages, and the corruption, selfishness, and subserviency of the Irish Parliament before and after 1782,—are the best part of the book. An occasional ray of cheer lights up the general gloom. "Dublin was gay, mansions rose, claret flowed, wit sparkled, the dance went round" (p. 125).

Mr. Smith makes no pretense at original research. His authorities are Bagwell, Froude, and Lecky and half a dozen others whom he mentions in the preface, but whose conclusions he does not always follow. In a book of such brief compass and effective contrasts there are some exaggerations of statement. Grattan's Parliament is condemned too unqualifiedly, and Burke, Wolfe Tone, and O'Connell judged too severely. Overpopulation, due partly to the Church's "inculcation of early marriages, the effects of which may be morally good but are economically perilous" (p. 219), is reiterated (pp. 192, 211) as the chief of Ireland's economic ills. It is not, however, general overpopulation, but the congestion of population in certain districts which is the great evil. No mention is made of the recent attempts to relieve this congestion. In fact Mr. Smith's whole account of the last forty years is very disappointing. It was some forty years ago that he visited Ireland and wrote a book on *Irish History and Irish Character*; it would seem that he has no special interest in, and has made no special study of, Ireland since that day. Gladstone's Home Rule bills, with which he has no sympathy, he dismisses in a few ironical sentences. He tells practically nothing of the great agrarian questions, of England's new solicitude for Ireland, of the substance and working of the great Irish Land acts; nothing of Sir Horace Plunkett's activity and optimism for Ireland in the New Century, nor of his efforts to turn the sentimental Irishman from political agitation back to practical agriculture. Yet these are the very questions of which the student of Irish history and Irish questions will be most anxious to know, and upon which he ought to be informed. Conscientious perhaps of this deficiency, Mr. Smith has appended "An Account of the Irish Land Code, by Hugh J. McCann, B.L.," but this is altogether unsatisfactory. It consists for the most part of ill-digested verbatim extracts from the various Land Purchase Acts and the Dunraven Conference; it is legal but not lucid; it lacks the economic point of view

and gives no real insight into the essence and working of these great acts. The reader, leaving the clear path of Mr. Smith's delightful narrative, loses himself in a maze of "present tenancies" and "future tenancies", "statutory terms" and "hanging gales".

As a sketch of Irish history this book is, on the whole, excellent. It will find a natural and worthy place on the shelf by the side of the author's *United States* and *United Kingdom*; its general characteristics are much the same as those of the two earlier books, but it ought to be more serviceable because there is less that is good in brief compass on Ireland than on England or the United States.

SIDNEY B. FAY.

*The Records of the City of Norwich.* Compiled and edited by the Rev. WILLIAM HUDSON, M.A., and JOHN COTTINGHAM TINGEY, M.A. Volume I., containing Documents relating to the Government and Administration of the City, compiled and edited by the Rev. WILLIAM HUDSON. (Norwich and London: Jarrold and Sons. 1906. Pp. cxlvi, 456.)

THE activity displayed during the past decade by the municipal corporations of England in the publication of their ancient records is gratifying to students of history. The good example set by London and Nottingham has been followed in recent years by Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Carlisle, Colchester, Doncaster, Dublin, Gloucester, Leicester, Northampton, and Reading. The latest addition to this list of valuable record publications is a collection of documents relating to Norwich, which for scholarly editing will rank with those of Nottingham and Leicester, and which probably excels these in the value of its contents. The first volume, dealing with municipal history, is edited by Mr. Hudson, and this will be followed by a second volume dealing with economic history, the compilation of which has been entrusted to Mr. Tingey.

It would require several pages to give a satisfactory summary of the mass of rich materials collected by Mr. Hudson, extending from the time of William the Conqueror to the close of the seventeenth century. They comprise royal charters granted to the city, plea rolls, a custumal, assembly rolls, deeds enrolled in the city courts, leet and muster rolls, and many other documents. The custumal is particularly valuable, perhaps more valuable than any other code of municipal customs hitherto published in England. It was probably compiled at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and most of it seems to have been of a still earlier date. Its fifty-one chapters relate mainly to the civil and criminal procedure of the city court and to the regulation of trade, but some of the by-laws set forth the qualifications of citizenship, the duties of town officers, and other aspects of municipal administration. Some matters are dealt with concerning which we find little information in other custumals, for example, the action of fresh force and the probate